

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

Manual of British Birds. By HOWARD SAUNDERS. Parts I.-XII.
London: Gurney and Jackson.

WHEN the fourth edition of Yarrell's 'History of British Birds' was brought to a conclusion four years ago, the chief drawback, in the eyes of many, was its costliness, due in a great measure to the illustrations. It was evident that with the successors of Mr. Van Voorst, the proprietors of the blocks, must rest the production of a cheaper book, in which the bulk of the matter should be incorporated in a smaller compass: but it was doubtful whether a plan could be evolved at once satisfactory and remunerative. However, by strictly limiting the articles on each species to two pages, inclusive of the woodcut, it was found that a volume of some 800 pp. might be furnished at the price of about £1; and, though this method was sure to carry objections on the score of brevity to the minds of a certain class of critics, we cannot but think that all is included which is necessary for the readers to whom the work appeals, while the result has proved equally creditable to the energy of the author and the enterprise of the publishers. Excellent alike in style and matter, it ought to be in the hands of every lover of birds, and should take the place of several inferior books on the subject now before the public. Since last April twelve parts have been issued, the monthly appearance of which has been characterized by the utmost regularity.

No better model on which to base the work could have been adopted than that offered by Prof. Newton's portion of the fourth edition of "Yarrell;" but, on comparison, it is quite obvious that the subject of our present notice has been completely rewritten, while the arrangement also differs somewhat, the system followed being in the main that of the British Ornithologists' Union List, which has at least the sanction of authority.

Migration reports are responsible for much fresh information, and the author has evidently availed himself of the writings of Bogdanow, Büchner, Giglioli, Gröndal, Fischer and v. Pelzeln, Menzbier, Prjevalski, and Winge. Aided by these and others, the range of perhaps half our species has been more or less extended and, in some cases, corrected; that of near allies has been elucidated or more accurately defined, and the lines of contact sketched out. The species figured as new are the Isabelline, Black-throated, and Desert Wheatears, the Barred Warbler, the Wall-Creeper, the Needle-tailed Swift, and the Lesser Kestrel; while the Marsh Warbler, the Red-throated Pipit, the Red-necked and Egyptian Nightjars, the American Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals are inserted without cuts; but the St.-Kilda Wren is only mentioned to be dismissed. The Marsh-Harrier, Goshawk, and Merlin are also figured afresh. Among our rarer visitors we notice further examples of the Yellow-browed, Rufous, Icterine, and Great Reed-Warblers, the Water-Pipit, the

Lesser Grey Shrike, the Red-breasted Flycatcher, the Black-headed, Rustic, and Ortolan Buntings, the Great White Heron (Scotland), the Ruddy Sheld-Duck, the King Eider, and the Harlequin Duck. On the other hand, the following species are omitted, with the exception of brief notices (not always under the corresponding genus):—the Gold-vented Thrush, the Purple Martin, the Parrot and American White-winged Crossbills, the Red-winged Starling, the Belted Kingfisher, the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, the Swallow-tailed Kite, the Canada, Spur-winged, and Egyptian Geese, the Polish Swan, and the Passenger Pigeon. The only vignettes retained are those of *Anthus rufestris*, *Neophron percnopterus* (juv.), the head and foot of the Nightjar, and the foot and breast-bone of the Swift.

Stronger proof is adduced of the specific identity of the various Dippers, a young Bittern in the down is recorded from Norfolk and a specimen of *Anser erythropus* from Northumberland, the nesting of the Brambling and the Pintail in Scotland on one occasion, and of the Snow-Bunting on two, is substantiated, the Kestrel is stated to have built on the ground and Spoonbills on trees at Fulham, and the recent irruption of the Sand-Grouse is duly chronicled; while critical distinctions between the species are not unfrequently italicized, and new details abound with regard to food, habits, interbreeding, number of broods or eggs, and time of nesting. The distribution of many birds in Britain is also considerably at variance with the older records, notably that of the Marsh-Harrier in Scotland.

As errors we may mention the omission of measurements in the Wall-Creeper and some confusion of language in respect to the Cuckoo's foster-parents, while we are sorry to see the American *Plectrophenax* substituted for *Plectrophanes*.

PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

December 19, 1888.—W. T. Blanford, LL.D., F.R.S.,
President, in the Chair.

The following communications were read:—

1. “*Trigonocrinus*, a new Genus of Crinoidea from the ‘Weisser Jura’ of Bavaria, with description of a new species, *T. liratus*; Appendix I. Sudden deviations from normal symmetry in Neocrinoidea; and Appendix II. *Marsupites testudinarius*, Schl., sp.”
By F. A. Bather, Esq., B.A., F.G.S.

This genus is proposed on the evidence of two calyces in the British Museum (Natural History) which were found among specimens of *Eugeniocrinus* from Streitberg. The species of *Eugeniocrinus*, *Phyllocrinus*, and *Trigonocrinus* may be arranged in a series which is apparently one of evolution. The present genus is there-